

WH-QUESTIONS TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXT

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah ada peningkatan yang signifikan yang statistic dalam kemampuan prestasi pemahaman membaca siswa setelah penerapan dari teknik *WH-Questions*. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 31 siswa tingkat kedua SMPN 5 Bandar Lampung. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mendapatkan data dalam penelitian ini adalah tes membaca. Pre-tes dan pos-tes membaca telah dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data. Paired Sample T-Test digunakan untuk menganalisis data dan pengujian hipotesis dihitung menggunakan SPSS versi 16 pada tingkat signifikansi $p < 0,05$. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa adanya peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik dalam kemampuan prestasi pemahaman membaca siswa setelah penerapan teknik *WH-Questions* dengan tingkat signifikan 0.05. Ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik *WH-Questions* dapat membantu siswa dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pemahaman membaca mereka.

Abstract: This study was aimed to find out whether there was a statistically significant improvement of students' reading comprehension achievement after the students were taught through WH-Question technique. This research was a quantitative research. The subjects of this research were 31 students of the second grade of SMPN 5 Bandar Lampung. The instrument used to get the data in this research was reading test. Reading tests in forms of pre-test and post-test were done to collect the data. Paired Sample T-Test was used to analyze the data and the hypothesis testing was computed using SPSS version 16 at the significance level of $p < 0.05$. The results showed that there was a statistically significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension achievement after the students were taught through WH-Question technique with the significant level 0.05. This indicates that WH-Question technique helps students improve their reading comprehension achievement.

Keywords: Improving, Reading Comprehension, WH-Questions Technique

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the important skills taught to the students from elementary schools to university. There are several experts who define reading. Nuttal (1982: 42) defines reading as the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols. Other linguists, Finichiaro and Bonomo (1973: 199) state that reading is bringing and getting meaning from the printed or written materials. Joyce (2006: 2) says that reading is an active skill, where the reader interacts with the text, and to some extent the writer. Bamberger (1975: 13) indicates that 'Reading is a complex process which comprises various developmental stages'. Still, Bamberger adds that first of all, the readers must have a perceptual process during which symbols are recognized. In other words, the readers must be able to decode the words. After decoding process, the readers must construct meaning of those words. Moreover, reading process has a relationship with other skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and writing. When we read a text, we will find the combination of sentences in paragraphs and vocabularies.

Grabe (1986) states that reading is the ability to recognize vocabulary and syntax automatically. Reading is the ability to read at reasonable rapid rate, the ability to grasp the main idea and scan for piece of information and the ability to adjust rate and adapt strategies for careful analytic reading and critical evaluation. The researcher agrees that readers should have purpose when the reader is reading. The purpose of reading passage commonly is to find idea from reading passage. So, reading in a foreign language needs reading skill in order to find idea and the reader should comprehend the passage when he is reading.

From those opinions above, we know that reading is an important skills that enables the readers to bring the meaning which exist both in our mind and in written materials. By reading people get something. We all know that million of books and findings in science and technology are written in English. Consequently, we can learn science and technology by reading. Of course to do that, ones need reading ability to comprehend the text being read.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand a written passage of text. Reading comprehension is what allows the reader to interact with the text in a meaningful way. It is the bridge from passive reading to active reading from letters and words to characters and contexts. It is supported by Caldwell (2008: 4) who states that reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

Reading comprehension is a process involving the understanding of the reading text itself. Broughton et al. (2002: 89) state, reading is a complex skill, that is to say that it involves a whole series of lesser skill. By reading, students will be able to identify and to understand any kinds of text in English.

Finnocchiario and Bonomo (1973: 132) suggest that reading comprehension is ability which depends on the accuracy and speed of grapheme perception, that is perception of written symbols, control of language relationship and structure, knowledge of vocabulary items and lexical combination, awareness of redundancy, the ability to use contextual clues and recognition of cultural allusions.

Based on the statements above, English teacher need to develop their teaching technique especially in teaching reading comprehension because the techniques of teaching influence the students' success. Therefore, The teacher needs a technique to make the students comprehend and catch the idea of the text easily. In this case, WH-Questions can be used as a technique to help the students to get the deepest meaning of the text. It can be inferred that reading comprehension is two ability which cannot be separated, in reading the students deal with the goal which is to understand the whole message content of the text, and to understand the text itself.

The WH-Questions are used to help students to identify the information from each part of the generic structure of the narrative text. For example “ what/who, when and where ” can be used to ask for the information in the orientation, because orientation includes the title and the introduction of the characters of the story, the setting of time and place. Who/what can identify the characters of the narrative story, when can identify the time setting of the story and where can identify the setting of the narrative story. Therefore the students can understand how to differentiate the generic structures of narrative text easily. Using WH-Questions are expected to be able to improve their achivement in reading narrative text.

Schell's 1972 study (Dechant and Smith 1997:237) remarks that there are three levels of comprehension. They are:

1. Literal comprehension: getting the primary, direct, literal meaning of a word, idea, or sentence in context. It means that in literal comprehension the students comprehend the meaning of the words, sentences and ideas in the reading text.
2. Interpretation: getting deeper meaning-anticipating meanings, drawing inferences, making generalization, reasoning from cause to effect, detecting significance, making comparison, identifying purpose. It means that in interpretation the students can undersatnd the text contextually. They can interpret the idea of the reading text based on their comprehension.
3. Critical reading: evaluating the quality, accuracy, or truthfulness of what is read. It means that in critical reading, the students can be a critize readers. They can be the person who is against or pro to the idea of the reading text.

The writer who acts as the English teacher at the second grade students of SMP N 5 Bandar Lampung, found that most of the students still have problems in comprehending the reading text especially in reading comprehension in narrative text. For example there are some students who could not find main ideas of a paragraph and make summary of an entire text. Students just read but they could not understand about what they have read. They felt that

reading comprehension was very difficult to do. Because of that, in teaching reading comprehension, the writer should be creative in developing the teaching learning process, using the appropriate teaching media, technique, strategy and method of teaching in order to make the students comprehend the text easier.

Teaching reading is very important in order to make students master in English. Students need to be introduced with as many reading materials as possible, because in the future it will help them to get many information and knowledge by the language. In learning reading comprehension, the students are expected to comprehend a text. Based on current curriculum used, namely kurikulum 13 (K13), as the guideline to teaching learning process for English language teaching in most particular, there are four language skills that should be mastered by the student, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to achieve reading skill, the students have to read several kinds of text, they are descriptive, recount, report, procedure, invitation and narrative.

In this research the writer is interested in studying the narrative text. Some reasons why the researcher choose narrative text taught to second grade of SMPN 5 Bandar Lampung. First, because narrative is a story that is created in a constructive format (as a work of writing, speech, poetry, prose, picture, song, theatre, or dance). So it will be quite easy for the students to read and produce the simple text. Another reason why the researcher chose narrative text is because the curriculum dictates that it must be presented in the second grade students of Junior High School.

According to the writer's experience, the students' reading comprehension of narrative text at second grade of SMPN 5 Bandar Lampung was still low. They still had difficulties in understanding the texts. In accordance with the result of pre-test of reading comprehension of narrative text, the researcher finds the score of the students' reading achievement. There were 31 students in the class, only 1 (3.23%) students scored > 76, while 30 (96.77%) students scored 52 – 75 on the daily test. So, the result of the students' English test in reading comprehension of narrative text were still poor.

An appropriate technique can attract student's attention and make them enjoy in comprehending the text. One of good techniques that can be applied by teacher to help the students in comprehending the narrative text is through WH-Questions. Nuttal (1987) says that developing types of question and techniques for them are essential to teach reading. It means that the teacher in teaching reading is suggested to use question to help the students to comprehend the passage.

Chesla (2000:22) points out that to find out what happens and why it matters, we need to first establish the facts. Readers need to answer some basic questions as the following:

a) What happened or will happen?

In means that the wh- questions are used to ask about what happened in the fable, such as

what did the lion want to do?

- b) Who or what was involved or will be involved?

It means the wh-questions are used to ask who the characters are in the fable, such as who felt in love with the white mouse?

- c) When did it happen or will happen?

It means the wh- questions are used to ask the time of the story happened, such as when did the eagle propose the hen?

- d) Where?

It means that the wh- questions are used to ask the place of the story happened, such as where did the mouse meet the lion?

Once we have established the facts, then we can go to answer the most difficult question, such as following questions:

What happened after the hen denied the eagle?

What is the moral value of the story?

WH-Questions can be applied to identify the generic structure of the narrative text. The theory stated about the importance of guided questions is given by Elizabeth Chesla (2000:24), asking by using wh-questions, such as who, what, when, where, why makes our reading process more active and provides us to find the facts in any passage.

Park (2000: 2) stated that WH-Question are questions beginning with where, what, when, who, and why. The WH-Questions can help students with a literal understanding of a text. The writer choosed WH-Questions as a guide. The writer believed that guided question has some advantages. First, questions lead the students to give long answer so that they will not get confused and depressed how to comprehend the text. Besides, WH-questions are questions which cannot be answered by yes or no. Students are expected to have an answer and the answer is expected to be quite long. So it is clear that there is no other choice for students than giving sufficient answer when they are asked. They cannot shake or nod their heads, or say yes or no. Therefore, through WH-Questions, the writer hoped it encouraged the students to answer the questions while they comprehend the text.

METHOD

This research is a quantitative research. Hatch and Farhadi (1982) state that quantitative is a kind of research in which the data used tend to use statistics as measurement in deciding the conclusion. The design of this research is to find out the solution of the problem that occurs in the class in teaching learning process.

This research was intended to find out whether there is difference of students' reading comprehension achievement before and after being taught WH-Question technique. So, in this

research, quantitative research was applied using one-group pre-test posttest design since there was only one experimental class which received treatments and also got pre-test and posttest. This research also used five aspects of reading skill to find out which aspects of reading that improve the most after being taught through WH-Questions technique in teaching reading. The subjects in this research were 31 students of class VIII J of SMP N 5 Bandar Lampung. Based on the information, the writer will determine the sample by using simple probability random sampling class by using lottery. The instruments used for collecting data in this research were reading test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data of this research were taken from students in class VIII J as the sample. The result of improvement of students' reading comprehension achievement was obtained through pre-test and posttest. From the research, it was found that the mean scores of students' reading comprehension in posttest was higher than that of pretest. Table 1. shows about the improvement of students' reading comprehension after being taught through WH-Questions. It could be seen from the difference of the means in which mean of the pre test is 62.45 and mean of post test is 86.97.

To find out which the reading aspects that improve the most the writer compared the means of students reading comprehension in pretest and posttest in each reading comprehension aspect. There were five reading aspects which measured in this research. They were main idea, specific information, reference, inference and vocabulary. The comparison of students' result of reading comprehension aspects before treatment and after treatment through WH-Questions technique could be seen on table 2.

Table 2. shows the difference of students' reading comprehension achievement before and after being taught through WH-Question technique in SMPN 5 Bandar Lampung.

Based on table 2, through WH-Question technique improved the students' reading comprehension in all aspects of reading comprehension, determining main idea from 77% to 86% and the gain is 9%, specific information from 86 % to 94% and the gain is 8%, inference from 69% to 93% and the gain is 24%, reference from 35% to 95% and the gain is 60%, and the last is vocabulary from 14% to 53% and the gain is 39%. It could be said that WH-Question technique could improve the students' reading comprehension achievement in all aspects of reading.

Table 1. The Mean Score of Pretest and Posttest

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post	86.97	31	4.317	.775
	Pre	62.45	31	3.854	.692

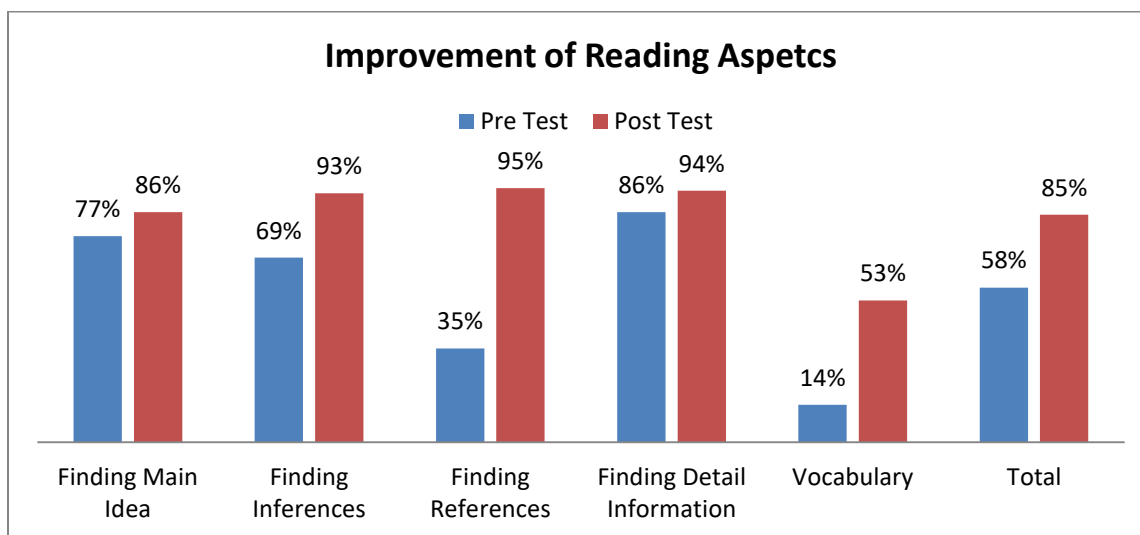
Table 2. The Improvement of Reading Aspects

No	Aspect of Reading	Pre test	Post Test	Gain
1	Main Idea	77 %	86 %	9 %
2	Specific Information	86 %	94 %	8 %
3	Inference	69 %	93 %	24 %
4	Reference	35 %	95 %	60 %
5	Vocabulary	14 %	53 %	39 %

Table 3. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post - Pre	24.516	3.723	.669	23.151	25.882	36.668	30	.000

Graph 1. Improvement of Students' Score in Five Aspects of Reading



The table 3. is about hypothesis testing. It shows that t value is 36.668 and t -table is 2.042. It means that t -value is higher than t -table. The sig.2 tailed is 0.00 (<0.05). Therefore, for the null hypothesis is rejected and the first hypothesis is accepted. Then, from the output it can be seen that significance value shows that $p < 0.05$ ($p = .000$). Therefore, it could be stated that there was a significant difference of students' reading comprehension from the pre-test to post-test in which the mean of the post-test score (86.97) was higher than the pre-test score (62.45).

Discussion

The result of pretest and posttest in class VIII J shows that there is difference of students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught through WH-Question is significant ($p < 0.05$, $p = 0.000$). It indicates that the The criteria H_1 is accepted if alpha level is lower than 0.05 ($\alpha < 0.05$). The hypothesis is "There is a significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement through WH-Questions technique". In other words, the use of WH-Questions can improve students' reading achievement in each aspect of reading. The difference can be seen by comparing the means score of students reading comprehension in pretest and posttest in each reading comprehension aspects.

The comparison of students' result of reading comprehension aspects before treatment and after treatment can be seen on the graph 1. The use of WH-Question can improve the students' reading comprehension achievement in all aspects of reading; the gain of main idea is 9%, the gain of specific information is 8%, inference the gain is 24%, reference the gain is 60%, and the last is vocabulary from 14% to 53% and the gain is 39%. Moreover, WH-Question improved the students' reading aspects especially in reference.

Reference has the highest improvement that other aspects of reading. In reference test items the students were asked to find out the word which has relationship between a grammatical unit that refers to another grammatical unit, usually a pronoun or a noun as the one on the question. It helped the students to build up their knowledge about the material especially reference. The writer assumes that this type of question i.e reference, has the highest gain since the students only needed to find the proper word to answer the question. Reference is a relation between objects in which one object designates, or acts as a means by which to connect to or link to, another object. The first object in this relation is said to refer to the second object. It is called a name for the second object. The second object, the one to which the first object refers, is called the referent of the first object. This type of question does not require students to make their own conclusion to find the answer.

On the other hand, specific information has the lowest gain from the others reading aspects. Francoice (1998) states that supporting details provide the reader with more information about main idea or subject of a passage. They are pieces of information that help the reader to see the big picture in the text. The students were asked to find the detail information in the text. It requires the students to read the text carefully to make sure that they did not miss the information.

It means that this technique is appropriate enough to be used in teaching reading skill in order to improve students' reading comprehension. Through WH-Questions technique, the students can comprehend the reading text more easily so that they can answer the question related to the text. This finding was confirmed the statement from Nuttal (1987) who said that developing types of question and techniques for the students is essential to teach reading. It is also in line with the notion delivered by Lukito (1990) that question is used to ask information for certain problem. It means that the use of question in teaching reading is to provide purpose, elicit, and focus discussion and to check it is also used to attract the students' attention to the topic faced. The result of this study confirmed the previous study conducted by Helmi (2009) who found that the students who were taught through questioning technique got the higher score than those who were taught through ordinary technique.

So it can be concluded that WH-Questions technique gave some positive effects in improving students' reading comprehension achievements and it is appropriate to be used by teacher in teaching reading.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research at the second grade of SMP Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung and analyzing the data, the writer draws the conclusion as follows:

1. There is a significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement through WH-Questions technique. From the gain of pretest and posttest that is 24,52, the researcher stated that there is a significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement after the treatment was given while the result of hypothesis shows the sig. level is lower than alpha ($.000 < 0,05$). It means that this technique is appropriate enough to be used in teaching reading skill in order to improve students' reading comprehension. Through WH-Questions technique, the students can comprehend the reading text more easily so that they can answer the question related to the text.
2. The result show that WH-Questions technique can be used to improve the students' reading comprehension. From the computation it can be seen that t-value (36.668) was higher than t-table (2.045). Students' mean scores in the pre-test was 62.45 and post-test was 86.97. From the gain of pretest and posttest that is 24.52, the writer stated that there is a significant improvement of students' reading comprehension achievement after the treatment was given while the result of hypothesis shows the sig. level is lower than alpha ($.000 < 0,05$). It could be concluded that the use of WH-Questions technique improved students' reading comprehension of narrative text in all reading aspects. The aspects of reading that improve the most is reference and specific information has the lowest improvement among other aspects of reading.
3. Reference was the aspect that improve the most because WH-Questions technique could develop their ability to find out the word which has refers to the some object with word on the question. It does not require students to make their own conclusion to find the answer.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Suggestions for the teacher:
 - a. English teachers are recommended to apply WH-Questions technique as the alternative way in teaching reading using narrative text because it can help the students in comprehending the text easier.
 - b. English teachers can use another type of text such as narrative, recount, report, etc in WH-Questions technique. It will make the students easier to comprehend the text.
2. Suggestions for further researchers:
 - a. Further researchers may conduct research using this technique on different level of students. It can be applied in senior high school students or university students.
 - b. Further researchers can apply WH-Questions technique in another English skill for example writing skill.

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